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Eighth Meeting of the Conference
of African Ministers of Transport,
Communications and Planning

Abuja, Nigeria
7 - 9 February 1991

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS ON THE RASCOM FEASIBILITY STUDY

Abuja, Nigeria, 4-6 February 1991

A. ORGANIZATION

1. The special Conference of Ministers responsible for Telecommunications was held at the Nicon Noga Hilton, Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria, from 4 to 6 February 1991, at the invitation of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

B. ATTENDANCE

2. Representatives of 44 state members of the Economic Commission for Africa were present: Algerie, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroun, Cap-Vert, Comores, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinee, Guinee-Bissau, Guinee Equatoriale, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Central African Republic, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Seychelles, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tchad, Tunisia, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

3. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the following: United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, African and international organizations; African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), African Development Bank (ADB), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Organization of African Unity (OAF), Pan-African Telecommunications Union (PAT), Union Africane des Postes et Telecommunications (UAPT), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and Union des Radiodiffusions et Televisions d'Afrique (URTNA), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), Agence pour le securite e la naviation aerienne (ASECNA).

4. Italy, European Satellite Consulting Organisation (ESCO), Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and Preferential Trade Area (PTA), participated in the meeting as observers.

C. OPENING OF THE MEETING

5. The Honourable Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Major General Gado Naski welcomed the Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Honourable Ministers and other delegates to Abuja. He stated that the new Federal Capital Territory occupies some 8,000 sq. km. of land while Abuja city itself occupies 265 sq. km. of land. The Honourable Minister then urged other African countries intending to relocate their capital cities to borrow a leaf from Abuja,

6. Finally he urged the delegates to seize the opportunity of their visit to familiarize themselves with Abuja and its environs.

7. The Executive Secretary of ECA and United Nation Under-Secretary General, Professor Adebayo Adedeji in his opening statement expressed gratitude to the people and Government of Nigeria not only for graciously offering to host the Special Conference of African Ministers responsible for Telecommunications, but also for having accepted to host a series of several ECA-sponsored meetings here in Abuja from 23 January to 9 February 1991.

8. He then recalled the circumstances which led to the request for the RASCOM Feasibility Study. He observed that it had been sixteen years since the first concrete step was taken by the ECA Conference of Ministers at its twelfth session held in Nairobi, Kenya at which it adopted resolution 281 (XII) requesting ECA, OAF and ITU to organize a feasibility study for the establishment of a Regional African Satellite system within the first UNTACDA programme.

9. In reviewing the development of telecommunications in Africa, he noted that, inspite of the progress achieved, the telecommunications sector had not lived up to expectations. Because of the concentration of the network in the urban centres, it had made minimal impact on the development of rural areas, the centre for agricultural activities.

10. The Executive Secretary also referred to the institutional framework established for the execution of the RASCOM feasibility; the IACC in which ECA as Vice-Chairman and Lead Agency of the UNTACDA programme had endeavoured to support tne RASCOM study. He stated that ECA considers the RASCOM Project as an essential and major contribution to the socio-economic development of Africa. He also mentioned the emphasis put on rural areas and the integration aspects with the existing networks in Africa.

11. In reference to the conclusions and recommendations elaborated by the 2nd Interim Executive Committee (IEC) meeting in Abuja (28 January - 1 February 1991) he expressed confidence in the Conference ability to make the appropriate decisions. He concluded by thanking the financing institutions, the international agencies and the donor countries which have contributed to covering the costs of the Feasibility Study.

12. The Assistant Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAF), Ambassador B. Dede, thanked Nigeria on behalf of the Secretary-General, Mr. Salim Salim, for having hosted the conference. Like Nigeria, the OAF was closely following telecommunications development in Africa.

13. The Conference of Ministers responsible for Telecommunications marked a major stride towards the setting up of the African Economic Community as advocated by the Lagos Plan of Action (1980). In that respect, the next OAF summit would be takeing historic steps for establishing the Community.

14. Telecommunications were lagging far behind in Africa, particularly in rural areas which the network did not reach. Out of a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US$ 300 billion, Africa was at present investing only US$ 1 billion in the telecommunication sector.

15. The OAF had supported the establishment of the PANAFTEL network; it had also helped to set up the PAN-African Telecommunications Union (PAT), and the Assistant Secretary-General had appealed to the African countries to contribute to it on a regular basis.

16. He recalled the circumstances in which the RASCOM project was set up as part of the first Transport and Communications Decade for Africa, and the

supervisory role assigned to the IACC which was chaired by the OAF and made up of regional and international organizations. The IACC believed that the RASCOM feasibility study had clearly demonstrated the viability of the project, for the economic future of Africa lay in its rural areas. He urged the African countries to frame their general telecommunications development policies or review them it they had already done so.

17. After thanking the IACC for its fruitful cooperation with the OAF and the donors for financing the feasibility study, he reminded the meeting that the future of telecommunications in Africa lay in the hands of the Ministers responsible for Telecommunications and that the sector was of prime importance to the socio-economic development of the continent as a whole.

18. The ITU Secretary-General, Dr. Pekka Tarjanne, started his address by stressing the importance of this Conference in view of the fey issues which are up for decision namely policy issues, strategy issues and regional cooperation and integration aspects.

19. He went on recalling certain fundamental criteria adopted in the RASCOM Feasibility Study such as the emphasis put on rural areas and the financial viability of the project. In reference to the outputs of the study, he noted that the launching of the follow-up phase will require a minium commitment by African governments to support the program, both morally and materially. He mentioned that once a decision has been taken, the project would undergo a brief transitional phase during which the preparatory activities leading to the preoperational phase would be undertaken. He also indicated the advisability of a management option flexible enough to allow broadbased participation in investments.

20. In concluding his speech, Dr. Tarjanne stated that ITU will endeavour to assist and render its support in any future RASCOM activities as it has done in the past. He finally expressed his appreciation to the financial institutions, international agencies and donor countries which have contributed to covering the costs of the feasibility study.

21. In a welcoming statement, the Honourable Minister of Communications, Engr. C.A. Ige recalled that the Conference of Telecommunications Ministers was to consider the report of the experts that had met from 28 January - 1 February 1991 in order to take appropriate decisions. He then invited the Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to declare the meeting open.

22. In his address, the Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Rtd) Admiral Augustus Aikhomu welcomed, on behalf of the Federal Government and the people of Nigeria, everyone who had gathered in Abuja to attend the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Telecommunications to deliberate on the Final Report of the Feasibility Study of the Regional African Satellite Communications System (RASCOM).

23. He emphasized the importance of telecommunications in regional integration and development. However, he noted that although the rigid colonial system had hampered development in telecommunications, the post-independence era had not been better in view of other competing demands and the scarcity of resources. He cited such cases like transit routing to other African countries which in view of conditions imposed by our colonial masters had to be routed through their capitals.

24. The Vice-President reminded distinguished delegates of the onerous task before them of charting telecommunications in Africa to the 21st century. He noted that Africa can no longer bemoan the past but instead take here destiny in her hands. He remarked that the subject matter of this conference offered an opportunity for Africa to demonstrate her desire for self-reliance.

25. He cautioned against the belief that the conventional technology necessary to sustain meaningful development would be prohibitively expensive. Nonetheless, he noted that new technologies have evolved that would considerably reduce costs and time in implementing telecommunications schemes.

26. The Vice-President briefly recalled the objectives of RASCOM and as such was delighted to note that he Report of the RASCOM Feasibility Study was detailed both in content and scope.

27. He also noted the role played by the ITU in standardization which must be borne in mind in formulating regional cooperation.

28. The Vice-President observed that in consideration of the heavy capital required for the RASCOM project and the limited resources available, it would be desirable to encourage private participation in the venture without adequate machinery to enable the African Governments to control the majority share. This involvement in view of its complex nature, sufficient skills must also be developed for the RASCOM project.

29. He regretted to note that despite the 1984 Maitland Report, the telecommunications gap that was identified therein had widened. However, he was encouraged that African nations were not thinking of implementing a Regional satellite to complement other systems. He cited as an example the role of rural telecommunications where no citizen should walk more than 2 kilometres to a telephone facility. The Vice-President remarked that continental cooperation in telecommunications such as the RASCOM project would usher in an enhanced socio-economic and political cooperation in the African continent in line with the Lagos Plan of Action.

30. In his concluding remarks he observed that the satellite option was viable and it was now necessary for the system to be set-up. He informed the meeting of the willingness of Nigeria to host the organization.

31. He finally declared the meeting open.

Election of Officers (Agenda item No.2)

32. The following officers were elected to constitute the Bureau of the meeting:

- Chairman: Nigeria (H.E. Mr. I. Ige)
- Ist Vice-Chairman: Central African Republic (Mr. Jean Tchombego)
- 2nd Vice-Chairman: Uganda (H.E. Dr. Ruhakana-Rugunda)
- 3rd Vice-Chairman: Lesotho (H.E. V.M. Mokone)
- Rapporteurs: i) Morocco (Mr. Mohamed Wakrim)
  ii) Cote d'Ivoire H.E. Yao Nicolas Kouassi Akon)

D. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Adoption of the agenda and programme of work (Agenda item no. 3)

33. The agenda adopted by the meeting was as follows:

(i) Opening
(ii) Election of Officers
(iii) Adoption of the agenda and the programme of work
(iv) General statement
(v) Consideration of the report of the Interim Executive Committee
(vi) Any other business
(vii) Closure of the meeting

34. General debate

35. The representative of the Government of Italy, Mr. P. Serpi, thanking the Conference for the invitation extended to Italy to participate as observer to the Abuja meeting, reminded the meeting of the interest of his country in the RASCOM Programme and stressed the will of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of both his country's public and private industry to support the continental effort which will lead to the final realization of the Programme.

36. The Minister responsible for telecommunications in Ghana took the floor to express the support and encouragement of his Government for the RASCOM Project. He indicated that Ghana will spare no effort for a successful implementation of the program. He also noted that Nigeria's offer to host the Secretariat of a future RASCOM Organization deserved the consideration of the Conference.

Consideration of the report of the Interim Executive Committee (IEC) (Agenda Item No. 4)

37. The Chairman of the Interim Executive Committee presented the report of the IEC to the meeting. Following the presentation, the Conference deliberated at length on the various issues raised in the report which consists of 4 main elements;

(i) Background and Approach to the RASCOM study

(ii) Towards Telecommunications Development in Africa

(iii)Satellite System Options for Africa;

(iv) Implementation Proposals for RASCOM

38. Each of the above elements was discussed with a number of recommendations adopted. Finally, the Conference agreed to proceed to the implementation of the RASCOM project, commencing with the transitional stage. The institutional framework was adopted accordingly.

39. The Conference of Ministers adopted Resolution (RASCOM/01).

40. The report of the IEC as approved by the Conference of Ministers is given in Annex 2.

41. The Conference then expressed gratitude to all those who participated in the study and the financing institutions/donor countries.

Any other business (Agenda item no. 6)

42. Under this agenda item, the delegation of Cote d'Ivoire reminded the Conference that the words "communications" and "Telecommunications" should not be interchanged in the French text.

43. The Conference was informed that the Committee of Country Experts (CCE) held its first meeting on 6 February 1991, in Abuja and established its Bureau. Benin was elected Chairman, Ethiopia as Vice-Chairman, Zaire and Tanzania as rapporteurs.

44. The delegation of Cote d'Ivoire offered to host the next special Conference of Ministers responsible for telecommunications to be convened by the ECA. The meeting took not of the offer.

Adoption of report (Agenda item no. 7)

45. After some minor amendments the Conference adopted its report.

Closure of the Conference (Agenda Item No. 8)

46. The Chairman, singly thank the delegations for their cooperation during the meeting and wish them safe journey back home. He then declared the meeting closed.

REGIONAL AFRICAN SATELLITE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

Resolution ... RASCOM/01

The Special Conference of African Ministers responsible for telecommunications meeting, Abuja, Nigeria, 4-6 February 1991

Recalling Resolution ECA/UNTACDA/Res.89/78 of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning adopted at Tangiers, Morocco, November 1989;

Having considered the report of the second meeting of the Interim Executive Committee (IEC) of RASCOM based on the final report of the feasibility study for the Regional African Satellite Communication System (RASCOM);

1. Endorses the report of the Interim Executive Committee;

2. Congratulates the National Coordinating Committees, the Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee and the RASCOM project office for the quality of the feasibility study;

3. Expresses its gratitude to ADB, UNDP, OAU, ITU, UNESCO, the Governments of Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany for their contribution towards the financing of the feasibility study. Also expresses its appreciation to the Governments of Ethiopia and Zimbabwe for their initial action towards the mobilization of resources;

4. Agrees that a dedicated satellite system is a viable option for the African countries as an ultimate objective with the interim stage being implemented by leasing and/or purchasing transponders;

5. Decides to proceed immediately to the implementation of the transitional stage (12 months) during which all necessary elements required to establish a RASCOM organization will be collected and presented to the special Conference of Telecommunications Ministers scheduled to be convened at the end of the transitional stage;

6. Approves the proposed institutional framework for the transitional stage as given in the Annex to this resolution;

7. Calls on member countries to give high priority to the project and to express their intention to participate;

8. Invites the IATC to continue to support the project and collaborate with the RASCOM Interim Office during the transitional stage;

9. Requests the ITU to continue to act as the Executing Agency for the transitional stage and to host the RASCOM Interim Office during this period;

10. Requests member countries to pay their contributions of not less than US$ 80,000 as soon as possible.

11. Invites the financing institutions and donor countries to contribute towards the funding of the transitional stage of RASCOM;

12. Instructs the RASCOM Interim office to carry out the study on the pooling of African domestic transponders. To this end it should make the necessary contacts with INTELSAT, ARABSAT and all other concerned satellite communication organizations;

13. Requests ITU to take action to mobilize resources for the RASCOM project through its Voluntary Program;

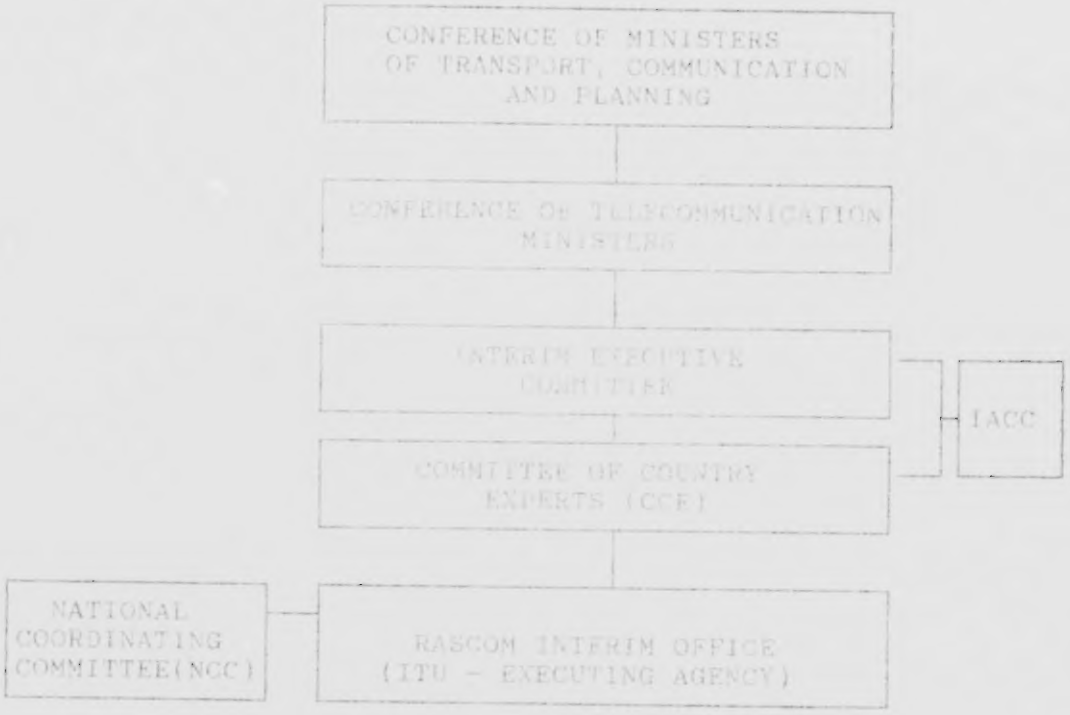
14. Requests also the Resource Mobilization Committee (RMC) of UNTACDA II, which is chaired by ADB to take all the necessary steps to mobilize resources for the transitional and implementation stages of RASCOM.

15. Requests the Executive Secretary of ECA to transmit the report of the Special Conference of Ministers responsible for telecommunications to the 8th Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning for appropriate follow-up;

16. Further requests the Executive Secretary of ECA to convene a special Conference of Ministers responsible for telecommunications to take a decision on the establishment of an African satellite organization, at the end of the transitional phase;

17. Takes note of the generous offer of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to host the headquarters of the future RASCOM organization;

18. Expresses its sincere thanks to the government and people of Nigeria for their ward reception, hospitality and all the arrangements made to ensure the success of the Conference.


CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATION AND PLANNING
CONFERENCE OF TELECOMMUNICATION MINISTERS
INTERIM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
IACC
COMMITTEE OF COUNTRY EXPERTS (CCE)
NATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE(NCC)
RASCOM INTERIM OFFICE (ITU - EXECUTING AGENCY)

(i) The fifteen member Committee of Country Experts (CCE) direct and supervise the RASCOM Interim Office on behalf of the Conference of Ministers. The members of the CCE are selected from the 5 subregions in proportion to the number of countries in each subregion. After consultation among the subregions the following countries were selected: Benin, Cameroun, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Sao Tome and Principe, Tanzania, Zaire and Zimbabwe.

(ii) The CCE will supervise the transitional stage in accordance with the decision of the Conference of Ministers. To this end, it will set up a plan of action on the carrying out of the work and decide on the number of meetings it intends to hold and any other arrangements that it deems necessary.

(iii) The cost of participation of the members of the CCE will be borne by their respective countries.

(iv) It is recommended that the CCE hold its first meeting in Abuja after the decision of the Conference of Telecommunications

Ministers in order to take the appropriate decision on the core staff that is needed to set up the RASCOM Interim Office. The members of the IACC would participate in this meeting in an advisory capacity.

(v) The present IACC will be maintained to advise the CCE and assist on resource mobilization in the implementation of the transitional stage. The cost of participation of the IACC members will be borne by their respective organizations.

(vi) In order to commence the transitional stage without delay and to benefit from the logistic support of the ITU Headquarters it is recommended that the RASCOM Interim office be located in Geneva.

(vii) The ITU is requested to continue to be the Executing Agency for the transitional stage. It is also requested to host the RASCOM Interim Office for this period.

(viii) The RASCOM Interim Office which will work under the supervision of the CCE, will be charged with the implementation of the transitional stage activities as described above in close collaboration with the national committees. The nucleus of the interim office should be drawn from the present project office and complemented by the services of specialists as and when required.

Regional African Satellite
Communication System (RASCOM)

Original: English/French
Document No. 2
Agenda Item No. 4

Conference of Telecommunications Ministers
Abuja (Nigeria), 4-5 February 1991

REPORT OF THE SECOND INTERIM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Abuja (Nigeria), 26 January - 1 February 1991

Opening

1. In his opening remarks, the outgoing Chairman of the Interim Executive Committee (IEC), Mr. Seyoum G. Christos (Ethiopia), stated that the second meeting preceded by an Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee (IACC) meeting, followed the first IEC meeting which was held in Addis Ababa in October 1988. He noted that this second meeting was decisive and hoped it would be capped with success to facilitate the launch of the project to the implementation phase.

2. He noted that the supreme authority of the project was the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning, assisted by the IEC. He therefore reminded the participants of their great responsibility in guiding the project, in the interest of all nations and countries of Africa, along the right path.

3. The Managing Director of Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL), Engr. G.A. Falode, welcomed all participants and observers to Abuja, the New Federal Capital of Nigeria. He wished all a most enjoyable stay during their time in Nigeria.

4. The representative of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Mr. Afanou, Chief of the Transport and Communications Division and speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General of the OAU, recalled the framework within which the RASCOM study had developed. To Africa, the study was a wager on the future involving implementation of the provisions of the Lagos Plan of Action. The main objective of the project was to set up a regional African satellite communications network, supplemented where necessary by any technology appropriate four promoting the socio-economic development of Africa. He expressed thanks to the members of the IACC, particularly the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), for the efforts made in carrying out the study, to the donors, and to Ethiopia and Zimbabwe which from the outset had pledged themselves to the procurement of funds.

5. The representative of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Prof. Bongoy, Chief of the Transport, Communications and Tourism Division on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the ECA, traced the different stages of the project and thanked the members of the IACC for their ability to reach a consensus whenever necessary with a view to producing a comprehensive unified project capable of reconciling the differing telecommunication concerns. He also

congratulated all the African experts whose efforts had enabled the feasibility study to be completed.

6. Mr. Jean Jipgueb, Deputy Secretary-General of the ITU, thanked the Minister of Communications of Nigeria, whose presence at the opening ceremony bore testimony to his country's interest in the RASCOM project. He drew attention to the different volumes of the final report on the feasibility study and pointed out the arrangements required for effectively implementing the RASCOM project. The success of the project required accompanying measures on the part of each country, including the extension of existing terrestrial networks and improvements in quality of service.

7. The representative of the Pan-African Telecommunication Union (PATU) Mr. John Andah, speaking on behalf of his Secretary-General, thanked the Nigerian Government for its hospitality which, he said, had ensured all delegates a pleasant stay in the country. He went on to congratulate the members of the IACC, the project office and the national experts on having successfully carried out the feasibility study for the RASCOM project. His organization would spare no effort in the coming phase to ensure the effective implementation of the project.

8. In his address, the Honourable Minister of Communications, His Excellency, Engr. O.A. Ige, welcomed all participants to Nigeria. He briefly recalled the basis on which this current meeting was being held in accordance with the decision of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning. He furthermore explained that the purpose of the meeting was to examine the final report of the RASCOM feasibility study with a view to formulating appropriate recommendations to the Ministers' Conference.

9. He praised the framework within which the study was undertaken, which enabled the involvement of multi-disciplinary National Coordination Committees (NCCs) in each country and a team of experts in a central project office operating under the auspices of an Inter-Agency Committee of 10 organisations, which could be cited as a unique example of continental cooperation.

10. He reminded participants on the usefulness of the database established, which would of necessity need to be up-dated. He also mentioned the need to maintain appropriate security regarding the accessibility of the database.

11. The Minister expressed his appreciation to the various organisations and countries that had financially supported the study.

12. In his further remarks, the Minister emphasized the need to expedite the decision on the implementation processes. He urged that any recommendations from the IACC should be realistic and sufficiently flexible to cater for the interests of all the African countries participating in the project. He also observed that any decisions must take cognizance of the fact that such a project

should be based on sound commercial principles to ensure its viability, if it was to attract investment from member states and international partners.

13. Finally, the Honourable Minister stated his Government's willingness to play host and to do everything possible to contribute to the maturity of any organisation that may eventually result from the deliberation of the Conference. He hoped that any such organisation could be hosted in Abuja.

Participation

14. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member states: Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroun, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The TACS, composed of ECA, ECA, ITU, OAU, PATU, UAPT, UNDP, UNESCO and UNTHA took part. The representatives of the following organisations also attended as observers. ECOWAS and ECOWAS.

15. The list of participants is attached in Annex 2.

Election of officers

16. The following officers were elected to constitute the bureau of the meeting.

-	Chairman:	Nigeria (Dr. E.B. Ojeba)
-	1st Vice-Chairman:	Morocco (Mr. Ahmed Toumi)
-	2nd Vice-Chairman:	Ethiopia (Mr. Seyoum Gabre Christos
-	Rapporteurs:	(i) Zimbabwe (Mr. Bernard Fernandes)
		(ii) Central African Republic: (Mr. Vincent Sakanga)

Adoption of the Agenda and Programme of Work

17. The agenda adopted by the meeting was as follows:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of Officers
3. Adoption of the Agenda and Programme of Work (Document No. E/ECA/TCD/77/Rev.1)
4. Presentation of the Report of the Inter-Agency Co-ordinating Committee (IACC) to the Second Executive Committee (ISC) (Document No. 2)
5. Joint Presentation on the Final Report on the RARCOM feasibility study

5.1 Background and Approach to the RASCOM study (Document No. 3)

5.2 Towards Telecommunications Development in Africa (Document No. 4)

5.3 Satellite system options for Africa (Document No. 5)

5.4 Implementation proposals for RASCOM (Document No. 6)

6. Preparation for the meeting of Ministers responsible for Telecommunications (Document No. 7)

7. Any other business

8. Adoption of Report

9. Closure of the meeting

The meeting adopted the following working hours:

Morning: 9.00 to 12.30
Afternoon: 14.30 to 18.00

Report of IACC to IEC

18. The Chairman of the IACC presented the final report of the Committee (Document No. 2). He suggested that a draft resolution making RASCOM one of the major instruments of cooperation and development of the future African Economic Community should be submitted to the Conference of Ministers of Telecommunications for Forwarding to the 28th ordinary session of the Conference of Heads of States and Governments of the OAU, scheduled to be held in Abuja in June 1991. The meeting noted that the report by the IACC was an appraisal and essentially for information. It was decided to take the contents into consideration as and when appropriate in the course of the deliberation of the other Conference documents.

Consideration of the final report on the RASCOM feasibility study

Background and approach to the RASCOM feasibility study

19. The Project Director introduced the document on the Background and approach to the RASCOM study (Document No. 3), which gave rise to wide-ranging discussions on such aspects as the database set up during the feasibility study, the participation of African experts in all stages of the pro the need to determine

the transitional period carefully in order to maintain the full synergy of the project. The following observations were made:

(i) the importance of ensuring the security of the RATDA database;

(ii) the need to update the RATDA database;

(iii) the need to seek consent from individual countries regarding access of RATDA database information pertinent to them;

(iv) the need to maintain the NCC in updating country database;

(v) the necessity for making the database accessible to African institutions and countries;

(vi) the necessity to clearly establish the modalities of access to the RATDA database by African organizations and countries;

(vii) the need to establish the cost of maintaining the RATDA database and access by interested parties;

(viii) need for organizing seminars/workshops to familiarize member countries on how to use RATDA database and establish their own national database;

(ix) the need to maintain the continuity of RASCOM project expertise;

(x) the request for issuing periodic bulletins to inform participating countries on the progress of the project;

In conclusion,

(i) the IEC expressed great satisfaction with quality of work produced by the project office, the NCCs, the IACC and the Project Office;

(ii) Expresses its gratitude to ADB, UNDP, OAU, ITU, UNESCO, the Governments of Italy and Germany for their contribution towards the financing of the feasibility study. It also expresses its appreciation to the Governments of Ethiopia and Zimbabwe for their initial action towards the mobilization of resources;

(iii) The IEC recommended that the RATDA database resulting from the feasibility study should be maintained for the project implementation phase. It further recommended that the data should be collected and the database be developed at all levels, i.e. regional, subregional and national;

(iv) it was affirmed that the tasks to be undertaken during the transitional period and the mechanisms relating to the project should be clearly defined in order to guarantee an appropriate follow-up under the best possible conditions;

(v) It was further recommended to request the assistance of the ITU to update and safeguard the databank pending its transfer to Africa, and that seminars/workshops should be held to familiarize national experts in the use of the database and other fundamental aspects of RASCOM.

Towards telecommunications development in Africa

20. The detailed introduction of Document No. 4 on the situation and development of telecommunications and broadcasting in Africa was followed by extensive and constructive discussions. The committee noted:

(i) the objective of providing telecommunication services in the rural areas is better based on the principle of accessibility to these services rather than telephone density (DEL/100 inhabitants);

(ii) the need for harmonization of standards for telecommunication equipment within the African environment;

(iii) the need for revising investment levels in the telecommunication sector should be in line with the African Telecommunications Development Conference (ATDC) resolutions (Harare, 1990);

(iv) the need for improvement of service quality of the telecommunication network on a national, sub-regional and regional basis.

21. The discussions further touched on the other aspects of telecommunications development in Africa, including:

- local manufacturing of telecommunication equipment;

- establishment of appropriate regional and subregional tariffs for the different telecommunication services;

22. Subsequently, the following recommendations were made:

22.1 That all countries should join in efforts to improve their existing networks by all possible means, national maintenance and operation, inter alia, through the implementation of National Plans for the Improvement of Maintenance (NPIM) within the framework of the Panafitel project; preparation of a well-designed general policy framework, appropriate tariff structures and technical options, efficient management structures, human resource development to match the needs, and planning criteria properly incorporated in national development plans.

22.2 In the case of the rural component of telecommunication networks, the IEC recommended that the initiative should be taken at the political level to allow sufficient investment credits for improving rural telecommunications. It was suggested in particular that 5-20% of investment in telecommunications should be devoted to rural areas and that the concept of accessibility should be developed further with a view to applying it in each country.

22.3 Given the volume of demand projection of the African countries, telecommunications equipment production should be undertaken at the subregional level. The meeting endorsed the recommendation adopted by the African Telecommunications Development Conference at Harare in December 1990 and requested the UNDP to grant the necessary financial assistance for implementing the relevant study.

22.4 That harmonization of standards in Africa beginning with broad based standards in such low technologies as telephone instruments and underground cables should be undertaken.

Satellite system options for Africa

23. The Project Director made a detailed and exhaustive presentation on the salient aspects of the satellite system studies. The activities undertaken entailed interalia communication systems engineering, financial and socio-economic evaluation, management aspects and comparison of various options and their variants.

24. He stated that a conservative approach was adopted in the analysis of requirements. It was noted that of the total telecommunication requirements firmed up, 30% represented the rural component, 57% the inter-urban and 13% the intra-African needs. The satellite design considerations as well as the ground segment engineering and the associated costs were also presented. Due account was taken of the existing ground segment. It was estimated that about 2,000 earth stations would be required by the 50 countries by the year 2005.

25. A financial viability assessment was undertaken for the space segment, at the country level as well as for the whole project (space segment + earth stations). It was pointed out that the viability was based on the condition that a minimum capacity of 2 transponders was used.

26. The estimated earth station cost excluding the associated terrestrial, switching and transmission network is of the order of US$ 850 million for the estimated 2000 earth stations for a 13-year investment period. The space segment costs were estimated at about US $ 500 million.

27. As for the management aspects, two options namely the classical and the Public Limited Corporation (PLC) models were presented. The classical option (INTELSAT, INMARSAT) was based on the existing satellite management structures, while the PLC option was evolved to attract government and non-governmental participation.

28. The conclusions of the analysis on the comparison of technical options demonstrated that the "dedicated satellite" options were better than the leased/purchase option.

29. The following remarks were made during the discussions:

(i) Considering the fact that the possible utilization of the Ku band would not bring any difficulty for North Africa it is necessary to continue the study of the use of this band for the whole of the African continent.

(ii) The pooling of transponders has legal, technical and financial implications that must be considered.

(iii) Regarding the Management Option the PLC model/scenario is more attractive.

(iv) The immediate establishment of an interim RASCOM office to carry out, among others, the above mentioned tasks.

Conclusions

29. The IEC concluded the following from the Report on the satellite system options:

(i) The ultimate objective of the Regional African satellite system is to have a dedicated satellite. In the meantime, a progressive approach using lease/purchase options should be adopted;

(ii) the modalities and details of initiation of registration procedures with IFRB will further be investigated during the transitional stage;

(iii) to express profound appreciation to the Project office, the IADC and the ITU for the good quality of work.

(iv) in addition it was noted that the experience of ARABSAT and other regional satellite systems should be taken into account in defining a cautious, pragmatic and coordinated approach for implementing a dedicated satellite system.

Recommendations

30. As a result of the above conclusions, the following recommendations were adopted:

30.1 Planned implementation of a regional African satellite system

It has been agreed that it is worthwhile to proceed with the implementation of a regional satellite system for African having a dedicated satellite as an ultimate objective. It is also recognized that the setting up of a dedicated satellite system requires a carefully planned step by step approach.

It is known today that several African countries are currently using about 20 transponders coming mainly from the INTELSAT and ARABSAT Systems, and that other countries are on the verge of acquiring more for their domestic use. The pooling of these transponders could be used to form the basis of a regional African Satellite system. This would require that comprehensive technical, legal and financial studies be conducted in association with INTELSAT and the African countries who own or lease these transponders for their domestic use.

Such a joint exercise of pooling of transponders may bring economic benefits as a result of collective negotiation with space segment providers. This would also provide to Africa a practical experience in the operation and management of a jointly shared common resource.

In order to ensure a successful implementation of a regional satellite system with the view to the economic integration of the continent, it is recommended that African countries indicate their participation in this joint endeavour.

30.2 Reconfirmation of requirements

Noting that the regional African satellite system should be established on the basis of expressed demand, it is recommended, as part of the planning process, that countries revise and reconfirm their planning process, that countries revise to achieving a better definition of the requirements with a view to achieving a better definition of the system. This is an important activity of the transitional stage.

30.3 Establishment of an African satellite communications organization

That an interim RASCOM office should start preparation towards the establishment of the permanent organ of the Regional African Satellite Organization.

30.4 Complementary measures

The implementation of the RASCOM project will only have beneficial effects if a number of compound and complementary measures are taken in combination with the investment in the space system. These measures include:

(a) the implementation of transmission links between the earth stations and local exchanges;

(b) the implementation of local subscriber networks;

(C) the development and/or extension of national networks;

(d) the production and distribution of television programmes;

(e) the implementation of transmission links between earth stations and television retransmission centres;

(f) improvement of existing telecommunication network operation;

(g) training in operations, maintenance and management of the system.

31. Implementation proposals for RASCOM

The IEC having examined Document No. 6 (Implementation Proposals for RASCOM) and after extensive discussions agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations.

31.1 The IEC recognized the extremely useful work that was carried out by the respective multidisciplinary national committees and recommends that the committees be maintained and that their respective countries make necessary resources available to carry out the national level activities at the national and operational stages of RASCOM.

31.2 The IEC observed that the project office and the IACC have accomplished their mandate in carrying out the feasibility study in a commendable manner. It is desirable to continue to benefit from their assistance, in a revised manner during the transitional phase.

31.3 After reviewing the results of the feasibility study the IEC concluded that the project is considered to be economically viable and therefore recommends that

African countries should decide to go into the transition phase of implementation.

(vi) Actualize and update the database that has been established for the project. Propose all the required means of transferring the database from the ITU to the RASCOM organization to be located in Africa.

(vii) Encourage each of the African countries to examine their respective national reports and establish a programme for the expansion and improvement of their national network with particular emphasis to the needs of the rural areas.

(viii) Undertake a suitable promotional programme so that all the countries are made fully aware of all the implications of the feasibility study and the steps that need to be undertaken at the national, subregional and regional levels.

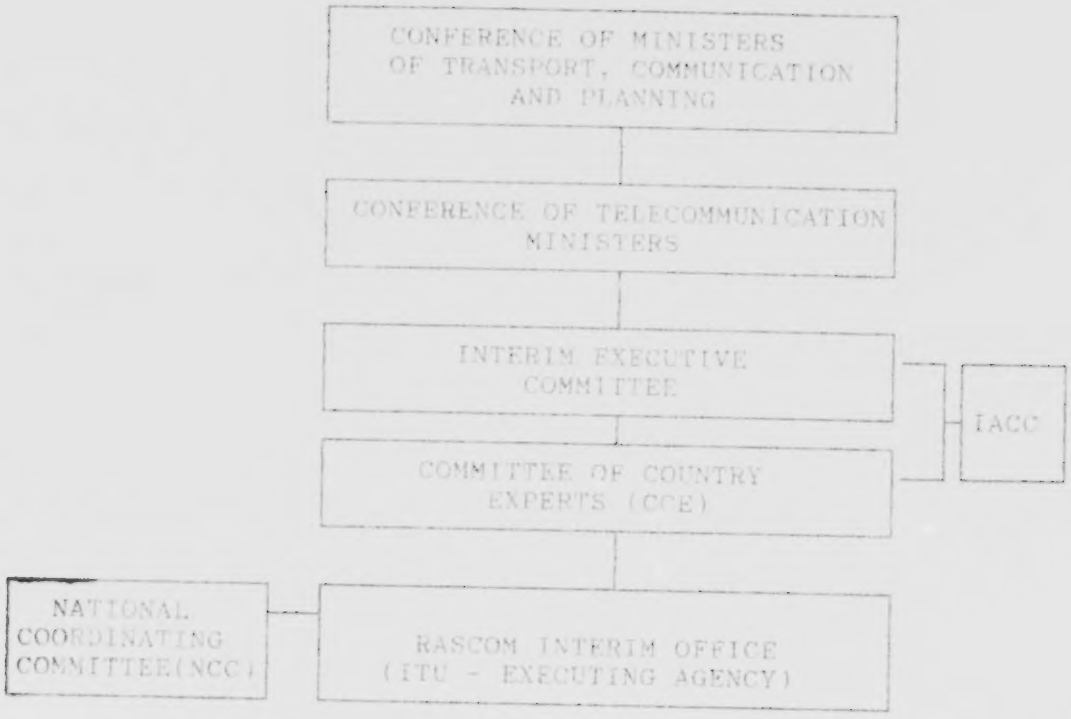
A suitable programme on promotion should also be undertaken to sensitize the financing institutions.

- undertaking missions;
- issuing periodical information bulletins;
- organizing seminars;
- holding of donor conferences (Round table).

(ix) Organizing seminars/workshops in the use and development of national and regional databases.

(x) At the end of the above series of activities all the ingredients required to establish the RASCOM organization, including the identification of those countries that are prepared and willing to join the project right from the start, would have been to join the project right from the start, would have been collected. These findings will be presented to a special Conference of Ministers responsible for telecommunications which will be convened by the Economic Commission for Africa, (lead agency for UNTACDA II) to take the appropriate decision on the establishment of the RASCOM organization. This conference will be financed by the Project.

32. The institutional framework for transitional phase


CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATION AND PLANNING
CONFERENCE OF TELECOMMUNICATION MINISTERS
INTERIM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
IACC
COMMITTEE OF COUNTRY EXPERTS (CCE)
NATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE(NCC)
RASCOM INTERIM OFFICE (ITU - EXECUTING AGENCY)

(i) The fifteen member Committee of Country Experts (CCE) will direct and supervise the RASCOM Interim Office on behalf of the Conference of Ministers. The members of the CCE are selected from the 5 subregions in proportion to the number of countries in each subregion. After consultation among the subregions the following countries were selected: Benin, Cameroun, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Sao Tome and Principe, Tanzania, Zaire and Zimbabwe.

(ii) The CCE will supervise the transitional stage in accordance with the decision of the Conference of Ministers. To this end, it will set up a plan of action on the carrying out of the work and decide on the number of meetings it intends to hold and any other arrangements that it deems necessary.

(iii) The cost of participation of the members of the CCE will be borne by their respective countries.

(iv) It is recommended that the CCE hold its first meeting in Abuja after the decision of the Conference of Telecommunications Ministers in order to take the appropriate decision on the core staff that is needed to set up the RASCOM Interim Office. The members of the IACC would participate in this meeting in an advisory capacity.

(v) The present IACC will be maintained to advise the CCE and assist on resource mobilization in the implementation of the transitional stage. The cost of participation of the IACC members will be borne by their respective organizations.

(vi) In order to commence the transitional stage without delay and to benefit from the logistic support of the ITU Headquarters it is recommended that the RASCOM Interim office be located in Geneva.

(vii) The ITU is requested to continue to be the Executing Agency for the transitional stage. It is also requested to host the RASCOM Interim Office for this period.

(viii) The RASCOM Interim Office which will work under the supervision of the CCE, will be charged with the implementation of the transitional stage activities as described above in close collaboration with the national committees. The nucleus of the interim office should be drawn from the present Project Office and complemented by the services of specialists as and when required.

33. Resource requirements

(i) Considering the great importance and the utility of the project for the socio-economic development of Africa, particularly within the framework of the forthcoming creation of the African Economic Community, it is important that the African countries demonstrate their interest by making financial contributions towards the implementation of the transitional stage.

(ii) To this end the estimated cost of US$ 2 million for the transitional stage should normally be borne by the African countries. The minimum contribution of each country is fixed at US$ 10 000. Nevertheless, considering the time that will be required to collect the funds from each of the countries, the Ministers may wish to indicate ways and means to obtain an advance on the required amount within a period of two months.

(iii) The IEC notes with satisfaction UNDP's willingness to provide an additional US$ 100,000 on top of any balance amount that is left over from the feasibility phase. This contribution will serve as a start up fund while awaiting the contribution from the countries.

(iv) The ITU is also requested to take action to mobilize resources for the RASCOM project through its Voluntary Program.

(v) It is recognized that the RASCOM project together with the PANAFTEL project is one of the major components of the UNTACDA II telecommunication program. Accordingly, the Resource Mobilization Committee of UNTACDA II is requested to take all the necessary steps to mobilize resources for the transitional and implementation stages of RASCOM.

34. Implementation phase

(i) The implementation of the RASCOM system is the responsibility of the RASCOM Organization that will be created at the end of the transitional stage.

(ii) It is recommended that countries make the necessary advance preparations so that their terrestrial network is improved and expanded and the installation of their earth stations suitably programmed so that the RASCOM system viability is assured right from its beginning.

35. Preparation for the meeting of Ministers responsible for telecommunications

The draft provisional agenda proposed by the IEC for the Ministers' meeting is as follows:

(i) Opening of the Conference
(ii) Election of Officers
(iii) Adoption of the Agenda and the Programme of work
(iv) Consideration of the report of the Interim Executive Committee
(v) Consideration of draft resolution
(vi) Any other business
(vii) Adoption of Report
(viii) Closure of the meeting

36. Draft resolutions

The draft resolution contained in Annex I was adopted by the IEC for onward transmission to the Conference of Telecommunication Ministers.

37. Any other business

No item was discussed under this agenda item.

38. Adoption of report

The meeting adopted its report.

39. Closure of the meeting

On behalf of the IAEC, the delegate of Senegal briefly commented on the work of the meeting and after expressing his satisfaction concluded by thanking the Federal Government of Nigeria for their excellent facilities put at their disposal.

The Deputy Secretary-General of ITU expressed his appreciation on the work done by the experts and thanked the Government of Nigeria for all their help.

The managing Direct of Nigeria Telecommunications Limited (NITEL) expressed the hope that all delegates had enjoyed their stay and found their deliberations fruitfully.

Finally, the Chairman thanked the participants for their collaboration and support, indicating that he would faithfully report to the Conference of Telecommunications Ministers the outcome of their meeting. He then declared the 2nd meeting of IEC closed.